

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :
 :
THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF : NTSB Accident No.
THE COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001
OCTOBER 1, 2015 :
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Interview of: MST2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Friday,
December 4, 2015

Residence Inn
Jacksonville, Florida

BEFORE:

CARRIE BELL, NTSB

This transcript was produced from audio
provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2:00 p.m.

MS. BELL: Good afternoon. I'm Carrie Bell.

I am the human performance investigator for NTSB and the group chairman for the Human Performance Group for this investigation.

Today is December 4, 2015. It is almost 2 o'clock and we are in the Residence Inn in Jacksonville, Florida.

Today's interview is in regard to the El Faro accident. We are interviewing Mr. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Can you please spell your last name for the record?

MST2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

MS. BELL: Thank you. Also present in the room?

MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB.

MR. PETERSON: Lee Peterson, the TOTE party coordinator.

MS. SERRIDGE: Melissa Serridge, HR manager for TOTE Services and part of the Human Performance Investigative Group.

LCDR [REDACTED] I'm [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard. I'm part of the Nautical Operations Group.

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1 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett, Coast Guard.
2 I'm a civilian marine casualty investigator. I work
3 with Melissa and Carrie in the Human Performance Group.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] And [REDACTED] Coast
5 Guard, Sector Jacksonville.

6 MS. BELL: Thank you. So, the NTSB is an
7 independent federal agency charged with determining the
8 probable cause of transportation accidents and
9 promoting transportation safety.

10 We are not part of the Department of
11 Transportation or the Coast Guard, obviously. NTSB has
12 no regulatory enforcement powers.

13 The purpose of our investigation is to
14 investigate safety -- to increase safety, not to assign
15 fault, blame, or liability.

16 However, the NTSB cannot offer a guarantee
17 of confidentiality or immunity from legal or license
18 actions.

19 We would like to record the interview to
20 ensure an accurate record. Do you have any objection
21 to us recording the interview?

22 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

23 MS. BELL: Thank you. We will provide a
24 transcript of this interview for you to review. And
25 then after you've reviewed that it will go into the

1 public docket.

2 You're allowed to have one representative of
3 your choice. And he cannot testify for you, but you
4 can ask him questions, or you guys can converse off the
5 record if you need to.

6 We would like to advise you to answer all
7 the questions to the best of your recollection. If you
8 don't understand a question feel free to ask us to
9 repeat it. And if there's anything that you say that
10 you feel as though you misspoke you can ask us -- you
11 can correct yourself for that.

12 So, we'll go ahead and get started if you
13 don't have any questions.

14 MST2 [REDACTED] Okay.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. So, can you just give me a
16 brief description of what you do in Sector
17 Jacksonville? Well, actually, tell me your title and
18 then what you do.

19 MST2 [REDACTED] I'm a marine science
20 technician second class and my job description is I do
21 foreign vessel examinations. So, all the large foreign
22 vessels that come in, they get examined by us if they
23 target out for it.

24 MS. BELL: If they -- can you describe --
25 what do you mean by that? Target out for it?

1 MST2 [REDACTED] There's a matrix that the
2 Coast Guard has established and certain criteria is met
3 it will set for being examined by the Coast Guard.

4 MS. BELL: Okay. And can you tell us what
5 the purpose of you taking a ship ride -- what that
6 purpose is?

7 MST2 [REDACTED] It was to gain familiarity
8 with the maritime industry and understand shipboard
9 operations.

10 MS. BELL: Have you been on any other ships
11 prior to that?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

13 MS. BELL: Okay. And can you tell me when
14 you were on the ship and for how long?

15 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't remember the exact
16 day. I know it was around May 20 for a week.

17 MS. BELL: And you boarded in Jacksonville,
18 is that correct?

19 MST2 [REDACTED] That is correct.

20 MS. BELL: Can you talk about -- how long
21 did you say, how long were you on the ship?

22 MST2 [REDACTED] For one week.

23 MS. BELL: One week. And during that time
24 you transited to Puerto Rico, is that correct?

25 MST2 [REDACTED] That is correct.

1 MS. BELL: And then back to Jacksonville.

2 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. Can you talk about the
4 orientation and familiarization training you got when
5 you were onboard the ship?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] It was -- we walked around
7 with the third mate and he just kind of gave us the
8 indoctrination that the whole -- every person that
9 reports onboard the ship gets.

10 I don't recall the exact details of it, but
11 we went over fire-fighting briefly. That's the main
12 part I remember. He showed us the windlass on the bow
13 of the ship.

14 And then we walked through one of the car
15 decks. And that was about all that I can recall.

16 MS. BELL: Okay. Did you feel it was a
17 thorough familiarization tour?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] It's hard to say without
19 recalling. I do remember actually we did go to the
20 lifeboats as well and they did show us launching. And
21 they described our -- what lifeboat we'd be going to in
22 an emergency.

23 So I mean, for the purpose of that, yes. As
24 being ship riders our primary responsibility was just
25 go to our muster station. So a lot of the

1 indoctrination with fire-fighting and stuff like that
2 did not pertain to us.

3 MS. BELL: And when did you have this
4 training? Once you were aboard how long was it before
5 you had the familiarization training?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall, but I would
7 say within the first 24 hours.

8 MS. BELL: Okay. And you said that they
9 informed you of your muster station and the lifeboat
10 that you would use in the abandon ship drill?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes, that is correct.

12 MS. BELL: Okay. And from our previous
13 interview there was it sounded like some -- I don't
14 know if it was with you, or with the other ship rider,
15 some question as to what muster station and what
16 lifeboat you were to go to.

17 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes. On -- near our cabins
18 -- it might have been on the door, or it might have
19 been next to it, but there was something taped or
20 somehow fixed to the door. And it said which lifeboat
21 we were to go to.

22 But then during the briefing, and it may
23 have been on the muster list, it said something
24 slightly different. It said the opposite. I can't
25 remember the exact details though. But I do remember

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1 there was a difference on -- between which one.

2 MS. BELL: Was that corrected?

3 MST2 [REDACTED] No. Not while -- not on the
4 door.

5 MS. BELL: Did they clarify that for you so
6 you knew where you were to go?

7 MST2 [REDACTED] I mentioned it, but it
8 wasn't that big of a deal. There were no real concerns
9 that anything was going to be an issue so I believe
10 when I talked with Ms. [REDACTED] it was just -- I think
11 we were on opposite ones assigned and I just said I'll
12 just go to the one you're going to go to. That was
13 kind of our plan.

14 MS. BELL: Okay. So you kind of worked it
15 out on your own.

16 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

17 MS. BELL: Okay. So, did you participate in
18 an abandon ship drill while you were onboard?

19 MST2 [REDACTED] We observed. So, when we
20 were doing the walkaround they took us to the
21 lifeboats. And then I can't remember if they launched
22 both, or lowered them partially, but they -- I know one
23 did, in fact, get lowered. And so we just observed
24 while I believe three crew members did it.

25 And I don't know if they were the new

1 reports that participate in it, or if they were just
2 observing as well.

3 MS. BELL: So, that wasn't an official
4 abandon ship drill, that was just something they were
5 demonstrating for you and possibly for other new people
6 on the ship?

7 MST2 [REDACTED] Correct. It was not with
8 the whole crew. It was just barebones.

9 MS. BELL: Okay. Did you they show you
10 where immersion suits and those types of things, all
11 the emergency equipment was located?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall being shown
13 the immersion suits, but I know in my cabin in one of
14 the lockers there was a life jacket.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. So, you -- on the day that
16 you arrived who did you meet with?

17 MST2 [REDACTED] First it was with the chief
18 mate. He brought us up to the captain's office because
19 he was occupied and we filled out paperwork with the
20 captain.

21 MS. BELL: Okay. And did he get you all
22 settled with the duties that you were going to be
23 performing, and a schedule that you were maintaining
24 for the time you were going to be onboard?

25 MST2 [REDACTED] There wasn't really a duty

1 for us, or a schedule for us. It was kind of we can do
2 it on our own. Because we were just there to observe.
3 We were kind of just left to our own to decide how
4 often we wanted to participate with the crew and stuff
5 like that.

6 MS. BELL: So, in your interaction with the
7 bridge and the engine groups can you just give us a
8 general -- how did you feel you were welcomed aboard?

9 MST2 [REDACTED] The third mate and the
10 second mate were very, very accommodating to us. They
11 were very open to talk with us and teach us things.

12 The chief mate was -- he -- I don't want to
13 say he was rude, but he just -- I don't know, it's kind
14 of hard to describe. He didn't seem very interested in
15 having us onboard, but I don't know if he was just
16 occupied.

17 But through the course of the week he did
18 open up a little bit. I just don't think he was an
19 outgoing person.

20 MS. BELL: So, one of the things that we are
21 sort of focusing on for these interviews is the
22 interaction with the crew and just a general sense of
23 how you viewed them, how you would appraise them in
24 their relationship with -- working relationships with
25 you guys as well as with the crew that they're working

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1 with on a day-to-day basis.

2 So, did you spend much time in the engine
3 room?

4 MST2 [REDACTED] Not nearly as much as on the
5 bridge, but I did spend several watches on there.

6 MS. BELL: Okay. And so, can you tell me in
7 your own appraisal of the chief engineer, can you just
8 give me a rough idea of what you thought of him?

9 MST2 [REDACTED] He was very friendly. He
10 was very willing to sit down and talk with us and
11 discuss things with us.

12 He -- we sat in his stateroom and he went
13 over a lot of stuff. And he was very willing to
14 discuss the boilers and just the whole steam system
15 with us because both Ms. [REDACTED] and I had no
16 experience with it. And so he was very knowledgeable
17 and he seemed very welcoming and very willing to teach
18 us.

19 MS. BELL: What about the other officers in
20 the engine room?

21 MST2 [REDACTED] The -- I didn't have too
22 much interactions with the -- I believe his title was
23 the first assistant engineer.

24

25 But we did a watch with the second assistant

1 engineer Howie. He was -- I really got along with him
2 well. He was very knowledgeable and he was one to go
3 over the equipment with us and teach us as well. He
4 seemed like he knew his job really well.

5 He was very candid and I appreciated that.
6 So you know, he would tell us how it was. When I'd ask
7 questions about the crew, like the engineering crew,
8 and he was -- I guess he was a prior oiler wiper and I
9 was asking him questions about how he got to be the
10 second assistant engineer. He was very candid and told
11 me about the crew and stuff like that.

12 MS. BELL: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to
13 interrupt.

14 MST2 [REDACTED] No problem.

15 MS. BELL: When you say he told you about
16 the crew what do you mean?

17 MST2 [REDACTED] Well, for example, I didn't
18 know what the process was if you were, say, an oiler or
19 wiper to become a licensed officer, the process.

20 So, he told me how that worked. And so, for
21 example, he was singing praises about the -- I don't
22 know the position, but the crewman that was on watch
23 with him.

24 And so I said, like for example, I said so
25 if he's so good how come he doesn't -- why doesn't he

1 do it. And he basically said he's lazy. These guys
2 are lazy. I was lazy too. And you know, stuff like
3 that.

4 So that's what I mean when I say he was
5 candid and he would tell you how it was.

6 MS. BELL: So you can learn. That's the
7 purpose of you being there.

8 MST2 [REDACTED] Sure.

9 MS. BELL: Okay. Good. What would you say
10 in terms of the general sense of camaraderie among the
11 group in the engine room?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] It seemed to be really good
13 from what I could tell. I didn't really have too much
14 discussions about the camaraderie. But it seemed like
15 they got along well.

16 But you know, I didn't spend as much time
17 down there so I can't give an accurate description I
18 feel like.

19 MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you. So, let's move
20 onto the crew on the bridge. The same type of
21 questions.

22 So, for the third mate, how would you
23 describe the third mate? Do you remember his name?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] Alex Barrios, I believe.
25 And he was very willing to teach me as well. I was

1 asking him all kinds of questions about radars and
2 nautical terminology that I wasn't familiar with and he
3 was very willing to go over that stuff with me.

4 He was, like for example, on the hour they
5 would plot their position. And so they gave me the
6 opportunity, or I would go ahead and do that, and then
7 they would verify.

8 He was very exact when it came to it. So if
9 I was off just a sliver he was -- I think he was being
10 playful, but he would say you know, that's all right,
11 but if you were taking the, like, the second mate test
12 that would have been wrong for the Coast Guard. You
13 know, just stuff like that.

14 He had his particular way of how to do
15 things. I remember him saying how you should lay out
16 your pencils in relation to your Weems ruler and stuff
17 like that. So, he had a system, but he was very
18 knowledgeable and he was very helpful.

19 MS. BELL: And what about the second mate?

20 MST2 [REDACTED] She was very good as well.
21 She talked with us. She was very personable.

22 She was a little more -- I wouldn't -- she
23 was laidback, but not in an unprofessional manner. She
24 just wasn't as precise as the third mate.

25 But you know, she looked over when I'd plot

1 it, and she looked over and would tell me stuff. And
2 she was very willing to go over equipment and stuff
3 like that with me.

4 MS. BELL: Okay. And what was her name?

5 MST2 [REDACTED] Danielle. I don't remember
6 her last name.

7 MS. BELL: Randolph? Okay.

8 MST2 [REDACTED] Sorry.

9 MS. BELL: That's okay. I just wanted to
10 get it just for the record.

11 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

12 MS. BELL: And how about the chief mate?

13 MST2 [REDACTED] Like I said, he wasn't as
14 outgoing. So I would ask him a few questions, and part
15 of my ship rider indoctrination, I had a list full of
16 questions that I was supposed to ask and some of them
17 pertained to him.

18 He would answer them, but he wasn't as
19 outgoing with things. But he, you know, he didn't
20 really turn me away or anything like that.

21 MS. BELL: So, you had a list of questions
22 that you were to ask each of the different officers
23 related to their duties?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall the exact
25 questions, but they were very general about the

1 maritime industry. And from my experience in doing
2 foreign vessel examinations I knew certain questions
3 were for the chief mate.

4 Like, I vaguely remember something about
5 cargo operations. And it might have been a question
6 about how you interact with the shore facility. And I
7 knew he would be the person to ask regarding that since
8 he was in charge of cargo operations.

9 MS. BELL: Okay. So, can you tell me a
10 little bit about the captain?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] Well, the captain, he's --
12 he was abrasive. I didn't mind him. He had his
13 moments and I questioned if he really wanted us
14 onboard.

15 But in speaking with Ms. [REDACTED] and Petty
16 Officer [REDACTED] he -- I think he liked me the most. He
17 took me into his stateroom and we talked about guns
18 because he had a magazine about them. We got along in
19 that way.

20 He taught me -- well, he tried to teach me
21 how to use the -- I forgot the equipment. I think --
22 do you remember the thing you use for celestial
23 navigation? The sexton. That's what I thought it was,
24 okay.

25 (Laughter)

1 MST2 [REDACTED] So, he was showing the cadet
2 because the cadet had a sea project to do. And he was
3 working on that. And he was teaching him how to use
4 that.

5 And I was asking questions about it and he
6 was trying to explain it to me. So, he was -- I didn't
7 have as much of a problem with him.

8 I think in the moment I really questioned
9 just how abrasive he could be and some of the comments
10 he had made throughout. But I think he was fine with
11 me.

12 And when I reported back after what I
13 thought I mentioned one of the comments. But I think
14 in the moment I think I took it the wrong way. I think
15 he might have just been joking.

16 MS. BELL: And what comments are you
17 referring to?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] So, I don't recall the exact
19 situation, but we were on the bridge. And he was just
20 sitting observing. I don't know who was actually on
21 watch because the captain wasn't. But he was on the
22 bridge.

23 And we were talking. And I don't know the
24 context, but he said something, and I said something to
25 the effect like I'll leave my mark on this ship.

1 And he said oh, you already did with the
2 food bill. And he mentioned a dollar amount, how much
3 it cost to feed us on this ship.

4 And I think in the moment Ms. [REDACTED] and I
5 may have discussed it later on and how we thought that
6 was pretty rude.

7 But you know, looking back on it now I don't
8 think he meant it insulting.

9 MS. BELL: Were there any other comments
10 that you can recall that were somewhat abrasive? You
11 mentioned abrasive.

12 MST2 [REDACTED] Not towards me specifically,
13 but just his overall demeanor. I know Ms. [REDACTED]
14 mentioned to you about how I proposed, like, an
15 alternate watchkeeping just as an idea.

16 Because I understand -- I mentioned on the
17 ship rider how I don't think I would be cut out for it
18 because their four-hour watches, and how it is, and how
19 you don't really -- I wouldn't get an adequate amount
20 of sleep.

21 And so I think I was just throwing out a
22 hypothetical to the captain. I don't remember the
23 exact details, but it was either, maybe like taking on
24 an additional deck watch officer and giving everybody a
25 six-hour watch instead. Or maybe it was just keeping

1 the three and them doing an eight-hour watch. The
2 exact details I don't remember.

3 And he was kind of abrasive in saying no, I
4 don't agree with that. I believe in the American way
5 of standing watch. It's just kind of comments like
6 that that were kind of off-putting.

7 MS. BELL: Right. So, in general, back to
8 the same type question. Your general sense of the
9 camaraderie among the officers on the bridge. How
10 would you characterize that?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] I didn't witness anything,
12 but I know Danielle mentioned something about I think
13 it was the crew didn't really care for the captain.
14 And she may have also mentioned something about the
15 officers not really getting along.

16 But it wasn't really so much a bad-mouthing.
17 And I didn't witness anything. It was just, I think it
18 was more of a personality thing.

19 MS. BELL: So, in general if you compared
20 the engine room to the bridge would you say there was a
21 difference in how you would characterize the
22 camaraderie, or just the working environment?

23 MST2 [REDACTED] I would say yes, there was.
24 I think it started with the chief engineer. He was
25 more outgoing and he was more friendly and I think it

1 trickled down. I think everybody got along.

2 And I think more so with the officers
3 everybody kind of just did their own thing. But I
4 didn't see anything that would lead me to believe that
5 there was a huge conflict between any of them.

6 MS. BELL: You mentioned the watch standing.
7 Can you talk at all about crew fatigue while you were
8 onboard?

9 MST2 [REDACTED] I know that Danielle -- I
10 asked all of them and I know they -- I think I asked
11 them, you know, how do you sleep. Because you get off
12 work, you get off watch at this time, and then you have
13 to go eat dinner, or you have to eat. And then you
14 take a shower. And then that cuts into your six-hour
15 window you have for sleep.

16 And they mentioned how it was tough. But
17 the exact details of it I can't recall.

18 MS. BELL: So, did anybody really complain
19 about being tired while they were on watch?

20 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall. I can't
21 say.

22 MS. BELL: Okay.

23 MST2 [REDACTED] I think it was more of
24 everybody just kind of knew that there was a little bit
25 of exhaustion. But that's my thought on it.

1 MS. BELL: Yes. Okay, thank you. I'm going
2 to go ahead and around the room.

3 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett with the Coast
4 Guard. So, so far Ms. Bell has talked to you about
5 your interaction with the ship's officers.

6 So, could you just generally describe your
7 interaction with the unlicensed personnel?

8 MST2 [REDACTED] I spoke a little bit with a
9 few of the people that were on watch with the officers.
10 Jack was one of them. He was very friendly.

11 I can't remember the name of the other two
12 that were on the bridge that I interacted with. But
13 they were all pretty friendly with me. You know, they
14 all seemed to work well.

15 I do remember I believe his name was Jack,
16 he stood watch with Alex Barrios. He did mention about
17 how some captains wouldn't let -- they would remove the
18 chairs from the bridge and they had to stand the whole
19 time.

20 And he mentioned how some masters, how they
21 required them to interact when they're giving commands.
22 And I can't remember the exact details with Captain
23 Davidson, how it was. But I just remember him
24 mentioning something about that.

25 The other interactions, I had a little bit

1 of interaction with the bosun. He was pretty friendly.

2 Basically when I talked to him I just kind
3 of -- I didn't really talk to any of the crew members.
4 I did a little bit of professional, but it was more
5 personal stuff. Just where they've been. Well, I
6 guess it would be professional. Like how long have you
7 been sailing, where have you been, and you know, how do
8 you like that and stuff like that. And they were all
9 willing to talk to me about it.

10 MR. FAWCETT: Where did you eat on the ship?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] I ate in the officer's mess.

12 MR. FAWCETT: And then what lounge was --
13 there's two lounges on the ship. Which one did you
14 hang out in? If you did.

15 MST2 [REDACTED] I spent a few minutes in the
16 crew's lounge, but most of the time I spent our time in
17 our own cabins.

18 I did -- they had an owner's suite and there
19 was a TV that had satellite. And I did spend near the
20 end a night or two in there watching TV. And I think I
21 was by myself, but one of the times the chief mate and
22 the captain were watching a hockey game.

23 MR. FAWCETT: And the satellite television
24 that you had, was that during your whole transit they
25 had it? Or did they lose it? Do you remember?

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1 MST2 [REDACTED] They did lose it. I can't
2 remember exactly when, but I believe it was sometime
3 around the Bahamas. And I can't remember the exact
4 details, but I think they lost it all the way to San
5 Juan. So, it was only from Jacksonville to this point.
6 So they didn't get it back in San Juan or anything like
7 that.

8 MR. FAWCETT: Did they say it was related
9 maybe to their satellite antenna being blocked by the
10 stack? Or this always happens? Or was the loss of
11 satellite reception for the TV just like an anomaly?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] No, I believe -- either they
13 told me, or -- I can't remember the exact details, but
14 I believe it was just part of the packaging. So I
15 think they paid for -- the company probably paid for
16 like the U.S. DirecTV package, not the Caribbean. So I
17 think that's where the problems came from. So it was a
18 known spot.

19 MR. FAWCETT: So, you know, revisiting the
20 engine room again. You mentioned about how Howie
21 Schoenly, I believe, was a real talkative kind of guy.

22 Did any of the officers onboard, or any of
23 the unlicensed personnel in the engine room ever
24 describe to you sort of like -- I know they talked
25 about the steam propulsion plan.

1 Did they ever talk to you about any
2 idiosyncrasies of it, like reliability, or problems
3 with it, or point out like flaws or weaknesses with the
4 El Faro's propulsion equipment?

5 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

6 MR. FAWCETT: How about the same thing
7 looking at deck equipment?

8 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

9 MR. FAWCETT: Did anybody while you were on
10 the ship come to you and talk to you about anything
11 that I might understand as a safety-related issue?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

13 MR. FAWCETT: Did any of the crew talk to
14 you about working relationship related issues?

15 MST2 [REDACTED] No, they did not.

16 MR. FAWCETT: While you were at sea did you
17 see anybody, just out of curiosity, sitting on the
18 bridge?

19 MST2 [REDACTED] Crew members or just
20 anybody?

21 MR. FAWCETT: At sea. Anybody.

22 MST2 [REDACTED] The captain would come up on
23 the bridge and observe what maybe was going on, or just
24 to talk with who was on watch.

25 MR. FAWCETT: Anybody else?

1 MST2 [REDACTED] The cadet would come up.
2 But other than that I don't recall anybody else. None
3 of the crew members, or none of the officers just going
4 up to the bridge unless they had a reason.

5 MR. FAWCETT: No, I mean sitting.

6 MST2 [REDACTED] Sitting.

7 MR. FAWCETT: Yes, sitting in chairs.

8 MST2 [REDACTED] It was really just -- well,
9 other than who was on watch?

10 MR. FAWCETT: No, I mean did you recall at
11 sea anybody sitting on watch?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] Okay, just anybody. The
13 chief mate would sit behind the chart table. He would
14 sit in a stool part of the time.

15 MR. FAWCETT: So --

16 MST2 [REDACTED] Oh, excuse me. And also the
17 -- some of the crew members would as well.

18 MR. FAWCETT: So, they had -- they lowered
19 the boat while you were on there. Did they have a
20 safety drill other than you seeing them lower a boat?

21 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

22 MR. FAWCETT: Did they have a safety
23 meeting?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes, they did have a meeting
25 that the chief mate was -- he went over.

1 MR. FAWCETT: Can you recall -- if you need
2 a minute, think about it -- any of the safety topics
3 discussed in the meeting?

4 MST2 [REDACTED] I do not recall any topics
5 in particular.

6 And to be honest, just to clarify, I know we
7 held a meeting and it was in the crew's lounge and it
8 was with everybody except probably who was on watch,
9 and I don't believe the captain was there.

10 But I'm not totally sure if it was a safety
11 meeting, but it was some type of meeting.

12 MR. FAWCETT: And your attendance was
13 required, mandatory, optional?

14 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't remember if there
15 was an exact placement. If it was required. I think
16 we just decided to go.

17

18 MR. FAWCETT: As part of your training did
19 you -- when the ship got underway from port where were
20 you?

21 MST2 [REDACTED] I was on the bridge.

22 MR. FAWCETT: And so when did you get to the
23 bridge? Like an hour, two hours?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall the time
25 frame, but it was before the pilot was onboard. And I

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1 believe the port engineer. I don't remember the exact
2 title. Or docking pilot. I can't remember the exact
3 title.

4 MR. FAWCETT: And just to help me understand
5 what goes on, take a second just to think about, you
6 know, you're standing on the bridge. You have the
7 pilot coming aboard, docking pilot. What went on on
8 the bridge?

9 MST2 [REDACTED] I was on the bridge wing
10 talking with the captain who had a walkie-talkie. I
11 know they mentioned they had a checklist that they were
12 going to do. But I was out talking with the captain.

13 And then in between that he was kind of
14 coordinating stuff with the docking pilot and the tugs
15 as well. But I did not witness the checklist.

16 MR. FAWCETT: Okay, thank you.

17 MS. BELL: I just have a couple of follow-up
18 questions. You mentioned a cadet onboard. Do you
19 recall who that was?

20 MST2 [REDACTED] I believe they call him Jack
21 Jack. So I think it was Jack something. I can't
22 remember. If you told me his name there's a good
23 chance I would know.

24 MS. BELL: Okay. I don't know. I'm not
25 sure. Okay.

1 In general, did you feel comfortable asking
2 questions related to your training? If you had a
3 question, or something that you needed checked off of
4 your checklist, if you had a form that you had to have
5 filled out, would you say you felt comfortable asking
6 anyone to help you with anything?

7 MST2 [REDACTED] Everybody but initially the
8 chief mate. So, I think just with his lack of
9 approachability initially it took awhile. But then I
10 did end up asking him.

11 MS. BELL: Okay.

12 MST2 [REDACTED] Everybody else though, the
13 captain and everybody else, very approachable to ask
14 questions.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. And Ms. [REDACTED] mentioned
16 something about you guys had to eat at a different time
17 than the rest of the crew. Do you recall anything
18 about that?

19 MST2 [REDACTED] I do. We initially were --
20 I think it was around 7:30 is when we were getting
21 breakfast.

22 And then it was either the cook or the
23 steward, I think it was the steward, he asked us to
24 come at 7:45 for breakfast because -- I think it was
25 because he would get backed up with all the officers

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1 and crew coming to eat. So he just asked us to come a
2 little bit later.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. There was no conversation
4 with anyone about you eating at a different time
5 because you were Coast Guard?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] No. The only thing the
7 captain mentioned -- the first day we ate at a certain
8 table and it was with the two cadets. And then I don't
9 recall what meal. I think it was breakfast.

10 The following day we sat at a different
11 table. And then the captain asked us to sit with the
12 cadets.

13 MS. BELL: Okay. Thank you. I'm passing it
14 around again.

15 MR. RICHARDS: Can we talk about some
16 weather? Thanks. Sir, I have some weather questions.
17 Mike Richards, NTSB.

18 Was there -- do you recall if there was an
19 anemometer onboard El Faro?

20 MST2 [REDACTED] Could you describe the
21 anemometer?

22 MR. RICHARDS: Was there an instrument that
23 displayed wind information for the bridge?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] I believe so.

25 MR. RICHARDS: Do you recall the wind

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1 readout on the bridge? And if it was digital or
2 analog?

3 MST2 [REDACTED] I want to say it was
4 digital, but I'm not confident in my answer.

5 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Was there specific
6 gust information that was presented on the bridge?

7 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall that.

8 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. To the best of your
9 recollection what were the sources of weather
10 information for the officers on the bridge?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] The main one I think when I
12 asked was once or twice a day they got an email and
13 there was a computer on the bridge and that's where
14 they got the source of weather.

15 MR. RICHARDS: Do you remember were there
16 any other sources of -- did officers get weather
17 information from anywhere else, any other system
18 onboard?

19 MST2 [REDACTED] Not that I observed.

20 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. And you said that, I
21 forget the term you used, program -- weather program.
22 For lack of a better term, this weather program, that
23 was installed on a laptop computer on the bridge?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] Correct.

25 MR. RICHARDS: Where on the bridge was it

1 located? When you saw it.

2 MST2 [REDACTED] When I saw it it was on the
3 chart table.

4 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Did anyone show you
5 the weather program, show you how to use it?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes, the third mate Alex
7 did.

8 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Can you describe how
9 he explained the system to you?

10 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall. I'm not
11 familiar enough with weather and I don't recall so I
12 can't say.

13 I know I had a chart and it showed basically
14 the route they were taking along the Florida Atlantic
15 Coast. It went down and I think it had different
16 colors. And then I think it also had the -- I don't
17 know what they're used for, but the circles that went
18 around.

19 I'm sorry, I can't describe it. I don't
20 know what that -- I've seen it in other nautical -- in
21 applications. So it's not an uncommon thing. I didn't
22 understand its function.

23 MR. RICHARDS: Where else have you seen that
24 program?

25 MST2 [REDACTED] I guess on foreign flagships

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1 that I've examined.

2 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Did you see that
3 program on any other computers onboard the El Faro?

4 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

5 MR. RICHARDS: When you were in the
6 captain's stateroom was there a computer in his
7 stateroom do you recall?

8 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

9 MR. RICHARDS: Was this a laptop computer?

10 MST2 [REDACTED] I believe it was a desktop.

11 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. So, with regard to the
12 satellite TV, and obviously the motive here is to
13 understand a little bit more about what weather
14 information was available on the ship.

15 Do you recall if they had The Weather
16 Channel via satellite TV, or another cable weather-
17 dedicated channel?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] I didn't look for it. I'm
19 pretty sure it would have had it because they had HBO
20 and sports channels. So I would assume that it did
21 have The Weather Channel.

22 MR. RICHARDS: Do you recall if you watched
23 -- did you happen to watch any local news programs?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

25 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. I'll ask anyway.

1 Would you have any idea where the local broadcast for
2 news was coming from on the satellite?

3 MST2 [REDACTED] I would have no idea.

4 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Do you recall a TV in
5 the captain's stateroom?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes, there was one.

7 MR. RICHARDS: Did you observe any of the
8 officers on the bridge receiving, reading, requesting
9 weather information? Aside from the time that the
10 third mate was showing you the weather program on the
11 laptop.

12 MST2 [REDACTED] Could you repeat the
13 question?

14 MR. RICHARDS: Anytime you were on the
15 bridge did you observe any of the officers engaging
16 with weather information, or requesting it, or
17 discussing it?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] No.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. That's it for now.
20 Okay, thanks.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] Question on a different
22 topic. Are you trying to stick to weather right now?

23 MS. BELL: I think we can.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the
25 Coast Guard. My questions are about cargo.

1 What did you learn as far as loading,
2 discharging, lashing, just overall cargo topics? What
3 did you learn onboard?

4 MST2 [REDACTED] Well, I noticed that during
5 cargo operations it was pretty hectic. Everybody had a
6 role in that.

7 I didn't see much of the chief mate because
8 he was busy with it. During cargo operations in Puerto
9 Rico they were doing soundings and stuff with the
10 ballast tanks.

11 I know the cadet and the electrician and I
12 think the third mate were going around opening up what
13 I believe is watertight doors to lower decks. They
14 were all doing stuff.

15 And I know people were unhooking the reefers
16 from the ship's power and stuff like that. It was a
17 very chaotic operation.

18 And then people were of course driving all
19 around.

20 Lashing, if I remember correctly, that was
21 done by the stevedores, a lot of them onboard the ship.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] What about while underway?
23 What did you learn, or what interaction did you have
24 with cargo? Did the crew describe anything to you
25 about the lashing, or anything like that? Did you walk

1 through the cargo spaces at all while you were
2 underway?

3 MST2 [REDACTED] We did walk through the
4 cargo spaces. And when I was on the main deck where
5 all the containers were we looked at it. But I didn't
6 really -- we didn't discuss it.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] They didn't teach you
8 necessarily about the lashing or procedures used for
9 lashing?

10 MST2 [REDACTED] No, because I didn't have
11 any questions regarding it.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. What about the low
13 decks? Did you walk around the low decks, the second
14 deck, third deck?

15 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you recall how you got
17 from one deck to another?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] There were two ways that we
19 did it. There was a ladder to one of the below decks
20 from the superstructure. And then when we were doing
21 the walkaround with Alex, the third mate, we took a
22 forward ladder down. There was a hatch and then we
23 went down that way to the next deck below.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] And when you went down below
25 did you come back up the same way?

1 MST2 [REDACTED] No. Then we went through
2 the ladder well up to the superstructure.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] When you go through -- you
4 described the hatch. Was it closed behind you as you
5 went down? Or how did you?

6 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall. It was
7 closed before he opened it, and then I don't know if it
8 got closed afterwards.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. What about back aft?
10 Were there watertight openings and closures with ladder
11 wells back aft as well?

12 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] The vertical ladder hatch
14 that you described, do you recall if there was one on
15 each side, or if it was just on the port side or
16 starboard side of the ship?

17 MST2 [REDACTED] The one that I went down
18 forward? It was -- if I remember it was amidships.
19 So, it was -- not amidships, like right in the middle
20 of the ship. So, there wasn't a port side one or a
21 starboard side.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. I thought I heard you
23 say you went down a ladder well which --

24 MST2 [REDACTED] Stairs.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Somebody would go upstairs,

1 right?

2 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] And then I thought later you
4 said you went through a hatch.

5 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] It was more of a vertical
7 ladder.

8 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] And that wasn't centerline,
10 was it?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] The one with the hatch was,
12 yes.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

14 MST2 [REDACTED] Is that the one we're
15 discussing? I'm sorry.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Well, whichever one you went
17 through. Not the one that would resemble stairs in a
18 house, but I'm talking more a vertical ladder.

19 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes, that one is center
20 forward.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. You didn't go
22 through any that were on the port side or starboard
23 side?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] I think we did, but it was -
25 - I'm not sure what deck it was, but it was not on the

1 container deck. It was on the RO/RO deck.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Right.

3 MST2 [REDACTED] I think we went on -- it was
4 probably the starboard side. We went down one more and
5 I think we saw the rum tanks, or some tanks for some
6 type of liquid product that was cargo, not for the
7 ship.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. So, that particular
9 ladder, was there one on the port side as well that you
10 recall?

11 MST2 [REDACTED] I do not recall if there was.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Perfect. Did they
13 teach you about the lashings onboard for the RO/RO
14 deck? Did they describe how the lashings were done,
15 how it was decided how many chains to use, or that kind
16 of thing? Did they describe any of that to you?

17 MST2 [REDACTED] No, they did not.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Thank you.

19 MR. FAWCETT: Keith Fawcett, Coast Guard.
20 So, one of the things that you did. I'm looking at a
21 picture now. Are you in a lifeboat doing an inventory
22 of lifeboat equipment?

23 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

24 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Can you talk a little
25 bit about that?

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1 MST2 [REDACTED] So, I don't know if we had
2 questions, or if it was part of -- if Alex was doing it
3 for his maintenance that he was doing.

4 But we got into the lifeboats, checked the
5 equipment just for inventory purposes. And while we
6 were doing that we -- I think there might have been two
7 piece of food provisions that were either expired, or
8 they -- I believe it was three and they were -- they
9 lost their vacuum seal so they weren't tight. So they
10 replaced that.

11 MR. FAWCETT: So, when you were doing that
12 you're down in the boat with your PFDs doing that. Was
13 Alex with you?

14 MST2 [REDACTED] Yes.

15 MR. FAWCETT: Did you guys talk at all about
16 lowering the lifeboat? Like, you know, what it would be
17 like and have they lowered the lifeboat at sea.
18 Anything like that? Any kind of conversation that you
19 recall?

20 MST2 [REDACTED] No, we did not discuss that.

21 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So, the weather on the
22 voyage you were on, the voyages, was -- you'd
23 characterize it as what?

24 MST2 [REDACTED] Calm.

25 MR. FAWCETT: Did you talk to anybody on the

1 ship because -- and you're on there at just ideal
2 weather -- about what the opposite might be for the
3 ship? Did you ask anybody about their experiences
4 being in heavy weather, or the impact of heavy weather?

5 MST2 [REDACTED] I think I did discuss with
6 the captain where he sailed and asked him about Alaska
7 and the seas in Alaska. I think he said he had been
8 maybe in the Bering, but I know somewhere in Alaska and
9 how rough the seas. But nothing specific with that
10 ship.

11 MR. FAWCETT: And you mentioned that you
12 might have had a little better rapport with the captain
13 for some reason. Where are you from?

14 MST2 [REDACTED] Utah.

15 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. Because he's a Maine
16 guy so that's an immediate bond, right? Is Maine. And
17 I think the cadet, one of them is a Maine -- both were
18 Maine Maritime.

19 MST2 [REDACTED] Both, yes.

20 MR. FAWCETT: So, did he talk to you at all
21 about the transition for some crew members to the LNG
22 ships? The new ships.

23 MST2 [REDACTED] I think initially when I got
24 on the ship I was asking a few of the crew members if
25 they were going to the new ship. But early on I think

1 I caught on that some people were not going to be going
2 on it. It just -- it didn't seem like something I
3 should ask after a little while so I stopped asking.

4 MR. FAWCETT: Did you ever get a sense from
5 the captain in particular, either by asking him or
6 anything, about him going to the new ships, or not
7 going to the new ships?

8 MST2 [REDACTED] I don't recall the exact
9 details. I'm sure I did ask him, but I don't recall
10 his answer to it.

11 MR. FAWCETT: That's pretty much all I have.

12 MS. BELL: I just have one more question
13 related to emergency drills and things of that nature.

14 Were there ever any conversations about
15 where you would go if you were below deck somewhere and
16 there was an emergency or a drill? Was there ever any
17 discussion about where you would go?

18 MST2 [REDACTED] No. No discussion.

19 MS. BELL: Okay. That's all I have. Any
20 other questions? Keith?

21 MR. FAWCETT: No.

22 MS. BELL: That will conclude our interview.
23 It's 3:45. Thank you very much for your time.

24 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
25 off the record at 3:45 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: El Faro Incident
October 1, 2015
NTSB Accident No. DCA16MM001
Interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

DATE: 12-04-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 43 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

[REDACTED]

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Office of Marine Safety
Transcript Errata

Matter: EL FARO Investigation/Interview
Ref Nbr: DCA16MM001

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the transcript of interview for [REDACTED] taken on **Dec 04, 2015**. Kindly review this transcript for accuracy and provide corrections, if any, in the attached table.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

12/21/15

Date

Carrie Bell

Major Marine Accident Investigator

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR

TAKEN ON

Dec 04, 2015

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
14	1	do it	become a licensed officer
20	15	getting along	caring for the captain
21	2	so with the officers	so with the deck officers
22	17	wouldn't let	wouldn't let them sit
22	21	Interact when they're giving commands	Repeat rudder commands in a certain way
23	4	I did a little bit of professional	I did discuss a little bit of the professional aspects of his job

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED.

Initials

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

December 29, 2015

Date